

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 15-17 stand rejected in the outstanding Official Action. Claims 15-17 have been amended and newly written claims 18-26 submitted for consideration. Therefore, claims 15-26 are the only claims remaining in this application.

The Examiner's acknowledgment of Applicants' claim for priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document is very much appreciated. Additionally, the Examiner's approval of Applicants' originally submitted drawings is appreciated. Finally, the Examiner's consideration of the prior art previously submitted in Applicants' Information Disclosure Statement is appreciated.

On page 2, section 2 of the Official Action, the Examiner objects to the originally submitted abstract. Applicants have revised the originally submitted abstract, placing it in proper preferred form for an abstract and therefore any further objection to the abstract is respectfully traversed.

In this same section, the Examiner also objects to the title as not being descriptive. Applicants have submitted a new title "AIRCRAFT ASSEMBLY PROCESS" which is believed to be descriptive of Applicants' claimed invention. However, Applicants are not wedded to this particular title language and, should the Examiner have another title which he believes more accurately describes the claimed invention, Applicants will certainly consider any suggestion.

Claims 15-17 stand rejected under 35 USC §112 (second paragraph) as being indefinite. The Examiner's basis for rejection is the recognition that the preamble of claim 15 recites "an aircraft assembly process" and yet the body of the claim includes the limitation "producing an assembly tool." The Examiner suggests that the claim is unclear as to whether it is directed to

assembly an aircraft or producing a tool. The Examiner suggests that the claims should be rewritten to positively recite the steps of assembling an aircraft.

Applicants have taken the Examiner's advice, with one modification. The invention is an aircraft assembly process, but a process which is particularly useful for assembling at least one aircraft component. Accordingly, the preamble has been amended to recite "an aircraft assembly process for assembling at least one aircraft component" and the reference to the "producing an assembly tool" has been deleted.

Additionally, section d) of claim 15 has been amended to delete the structural limitations on the plurality of pick-up devices and has also been amended to delete former step e) which was to a certain extent duplicative of step d) (the remaining steps have been renumbered). Accordingly, claim 15 is now believed to meet all requirements of 35 USC §112 (second paragraph) and any further rejection thereunder is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner notes that the recitation of "and/or" in line 3 of claim 17 allegedly renders the scope of the claims unclear. As the MPEP has clearly indicated, as long as claim language is clear and definite to one of ordinary skill in the art, the claim meets the requirements of 35 USC §112. The term "and/or" is well known, in that it means both the conjunctive "and" and the disjunctive "or." Thus, claim 17 as originally submitted is believed to be definite to those of ordinary skill in the art. However, Applicants have amended claim 17 to recite "at least one of the steps of" with the details of the two adjusting steps specified. While "at least one of" means the same thing as "and/or," this language may be more acceptable to the Examiner and has been offered to obviate the objection to claim 17.

SCOTT et al
Appl. No. 10/693,949
April 29, 2005

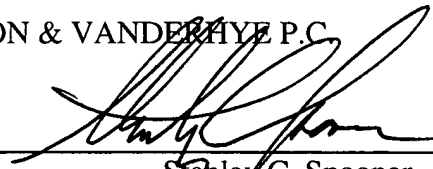
Applicants also offer newly written claims 18-26 directed to further embodiments of the present invention. Entry and consideration of newly written claims 18-26 is respectfully requested.

Having responded to all objections and rejections set forth in the outstanding Official Action, it is submitted that claims 15-26 are in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. In the event the Examiner is of the opinion that a brief telephone or personal interview will facilitate allowance of one or more of the above claims, he is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHUYE P.C.

By:



Stanley C. Spooner
Reg. No. 27,393

SCS:kmm
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201-4714
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100